

LEGISLATIVE LINGO: GLOSSARY OF KEY LEGISLATIVE TERMS:

- Act:** A bill which passes both houses of the Legislature and then is either signed by the Governor, becomes law without the Governor's signature, or is passed over the Governor's veto.
- Adjournment sine die:** Final termination of a regular or special legislative session without setting a date for reconvening.
- Amendment:** A formal modification, addition, or deletion to a bill.
- Appropriation:** A legislative authorization to make expenditures and incur financial obligations for specific governmental purposes.
- Bicameral:** Literally, having "two rooms," the term is used to refer to legislative bodies having two houses. The Hawai'i State Legislature, like the United States Congress, is bicameral.
- Biennium:** A two-year period. This term is used to describe the two-year term of a Legislature that begins in an odd-numbered year and ends in an even-numbered year. With respect to the state budget, the fiscal biennium begins on July 1 of an odd-numbered year and ends on June 30 of an odd-numbered year.
- Bill:** A measure that can add, amend, or delete a law; propose amendments to the state Constitution; or appropriate funds for a new or existing program.
- Budget:** Estimates of proposed governmental expenditures for a given fiscal year or biennium, and the proposed means of financing the expenditures.
- Caucus:** Conference of members of a legislative group to decide on policies or strategies; most commonly, a "party caucus" is for members of one or another political party,
- Committee:** A group of legislators, usually members of the same house, assigned to consider some issue or question and to submit a report on its recommendations for action to the body which created it.
- Crossover:** The process by which a bill switches houses for consideration; in other words, Senate bills go to the House, and House bills go to the Senate.
- Decking:** When a bill is in the final form in which it is intended to be passed and made available to the Legislature. It must be available no less than 48 hours before it is voted upon. Any bill not submitted in final form before the decking deadline cannot be considered for adoption during the session.
- Effective Date:** The date a bill, once passed, becomes law. Unless a different date is specified, bills become law when approved.
- Fiscal Year:** Period at the end of which the State determines its financial condition and closes its books. In the Hawai'i State government, this period is from July 1 to June 30.
- Hearing, Public:** A formal session of a legislative committee, whereby interested members of the public are invited to come forward with testimony on a proposal; distinguished from an informational briefing, which the public is usually allowed to attend but not present testimony.
- Held in committee:** The defeat of a measure by the decision of a standing committee not to return it to the full house for consideration.
- Quorum:** The number of members of a house, committee, or other group that must be present before the group may conduct official business.
- Reading:** Refers to the stages of the legislative process for bills,
- Referral:** The sending or referring of a measure to a committee or committees.
- Resolution:** Expresses the will or direction of the Legislature. It does not have the effect of a law, unlike a bill.
- Statutes:** The codified body of law known as the Hawai'i Revised Statutes.
- Veto:** A power vested in the Governor to prevent the enactment of measures passed by the Legislature.